

Rhodes to Independence

Steering Committee Meeting

May 17, 2005

Summary Minutes

In Attendance: Annette Bourbonnierre, Kathleen Burnell, Diane Cook, Aleatha Dickerson, Steve Florio, Tim Flynn, Elaina Goldstein, Steve Kitchin, Rich Pascucci, Arthur Plitt, Lauren Slocum, Michael Spoerri

Staff: Kate McCarthy-Barnett, Valerie Shore, Nancy Wooten, Dana Wright

- **The minutes from the 4/19/05 meeting were approved.**
- **For the sake of the meeting interpreters, Steering Committee members were asked to speak one at a time during discussions.**

Youth in Transition Workgroup

- **The Workgroup met once since the last Steering Committee meeting.**
- **An Assistive Technology Communications Plan is being developed.**

- An issue brief on 1619a and 1619b (Social Security work supports) will be completed and on the website by the end of the summer.

Transportation Workgroup

- The Workgroup will have its first meeting of the year on May 19. Workgroup members include many individuals not previously participating in this Workgroup.

Housing Workgroup

- The Housing Workgroup has met once since the last Steering Committee meeting. The Workgroup is currently finalizing the Focus Group (first of two) which will take place later in the week.

Diversity Workgroup

- The Workgroup will meet on May 19th.

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Resource Directory Subcommittee (Data Workgroup)

- Since the last meeting, a memorandum of understanding has been established between Rhodes to Independence and DHS regarding development of the Resource Directory over the next nine months.
- Rhodes will be bringing in as many people with disabilities, advocates, etc. to identify what should be on the website, based on what is included / not included in the Crossroads database.
- The Aging and Disability Resource Center was discussed. It was noted that there is a perception that the focus is on the elderly, not

people with disabilities, perhaps in part due to the fact that the federal funding came from the Department of Elderly Affairs. This has been a longstanding concern. Rhodes' leadership and stakeholder will continue to emphasize the need to put more emphasis – direction of resources – to the needs of younger people with disabilities.

Business Leadership Network: Update

- The BLN has moved back to a strategic planning mode.
- The MIG grant has money budgeted for BLN outreach and programs. However, there needs to be more discussion concerning how the \$14,000 budgeted for this purpose will be used.

Federal Legislation Update

- Elaina provided an update of the status of Congressional Medicaid budget cuts. An amendment created a Commission to study the cuts and decide where they will be made.
- States will be losing money through Medicare Part D as well.
- Steve provided a detailed update of WIA reauthorization, which was supposed to take place last year. The House has passed the Administration's recommendation intact. The Senate will be considering its draft mark-up later in the week and it is very unlikely that the Administration's budget will pass intact there.
- The Senate version is a comprehensive system for everyone (and states the One-Stops should be the place where everyone goes), not

just different groups and provides flexibility for transferring more funds to meet local needs.

Medicaid Buy-In Legislation Update

- Senator June Gibbs is organizing a public hearing to take place in the near future in part to hear employers' concerns regarding the implication of the Buy-In's language.**
- Elaina is writing a letter on the Buy-In language to CMS which is a "courtesy response" – she is writing in her capacity as Director of Public Policy in the URI College of Pharmacy and not as Project Director of Rhodes to Independence. Steering Committee members agreed that this was appropriate.**

Other Business / Next Steps

- Staff is planning for a RI Job Fair to be held in October. Valerie and Elaina attended a Job Fair in Boston and obtained valuable input. It is hoped to develop the Job Fair in collaboration with networkri.**
- A decision will be made at the June meeting concerning whether to take off either the July or August meeting (summer break). In 2004 the Steering Committee skipped the July meeting.**
- Steve Kitchen will be out of town and unable to attend the June meeting.**
- A request was made to Steering Committee members (employer**

community or consumers) to volunteer to work with Valerie on a strategic plan for the Job Fair.

- Lauren Slocum pointed out that eventually the best way to reach employers concerning jobs is for there not to be a Job Fair stressing people with disabilities, but a single Job Fair for everyone - emphasizing to employers that qualified candidates in general will be attending - to be held on an annual basis. The BLN could be key to outreach.**

- The Governor's Commission on Disabilities has college fellowships worth \$2,500 available.**

- The next Rhodes to Independence meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 21st, 2:30 – 4:00 pm at the Dept of Labor and Training, 1st Floor conference room.**